

OUT OF TIME

Issue No. 61 *Out of Control--Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners* April 2002

HEALTH CARE CRISIS FOR WOMEN PRISONERS!

Women Demand End to Medical Abuse

From the prison that is internationally notorious for its abuse, mistreatment and torture of women prisoners with serious and life-threatening illnesses, another health crisis has emerged. The Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), the only licensed medical facility for the more than 10,500 women prisoners in California, has become a punishment unit instead of an infirmary. Since December 2001, we have heard directly from women prisoners who have been physically abused by nursing assistants and nurses. Women have gone into the SNF with serious medical conditions which have been ignored by staff until they have become life-threatening. Women are told not to go to the nursing station when they need help (where staff sits and laughs and jokes

all day). They are told to go to their rooms and use their call buttons (which are routinely ignored by SNF staff!)

Shortly after women began complaining about abuse in the Skilled Nursing Facility, staff began a major lockdown. Women prisoners are only allowed out of their rooms for approximately 2-3 hours during the day (if they are ambulatory!) Women confined to their beds are totally ignored, their bedding and bandages are rarely changed and they are forgotten. Living in the SNF is like being locked down in a security housing unit. Women prisoners are fearful for their lives.

CDC Visitation Restrictions Impact LGBT

Excerpted from Bay Area Reporter
by Judy Greenspan and Kevin Weaver
of California Prison Focus

The California Department of Corrections has placed new and more punitive restrictions on families, partners, and friends who wish to visit their loved ones in California State prisons... These new draconian restrictions include requiring children over 7 to present photo ID's, having their background checked for criminal activity (!), and preventing them from sitting on their father's lap after their 7th birthday. Prisoners convicted of some drug-related offenses will not be allowed to have contact visits (regular social visits) for one year. In addition, visitation of prisoners in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) will be limited to "immediate family members" only. The California Department of Corrections has made it clear that it has only a heterosexist view of marriage and immediate family, meaning that LGBT spouses of incarcerated individuals will be further denied rights married, heterosexual partners currently have. Of course, this change not only includes LGBT folks, but common law heterosexual relationships and common friendships will be affected as well.

Denying visitation to prisoners for reasons as arbitrary as this is a fundamental affront to the human rights of prisoners and an escalation of the contempt the California Department of Corrections (CDC) has for poor people in California, both incarcerated and free. This contempt is underscored by the daily reminder that LGBT prisoners and their spouses have no recourse to pursue their rights within the California State prison system. While our domestic partnerships are acknowledged throughout the state, the CDC refuses to recognize such relationships, as if they are above the law. To add insult to injury, LGBT prisoners are denied overnight conjugal or family visits with their loved ones and any show of affection during a social visit carries the threat of total visit termination. What we see in this policy is an extension of the discrimination, abuse, and harassment LGBT prisoners suffer daily.

Transgender and gender variant prisoners, and their visitors, are singled out for the harshest treatment. For instance, although medically and psychologically neces-

Dear Lisa: About Hep C

Lisa X wrote to us in December from FCI Dublin with many questions about Hepatitis C (HCV). Our letter to her was returned, slit open, stapled shut and marked "GONE". No forwarding address. Following is a summary of the questions Lisa asked us. OOC hopes the answers find Lisa and are helpful to others living with this disease.

How do you get Hep C? Can women give Hep C to female partners? When?

Hepatitis C is caused by a virus passed between people through blood to blood contact. Almost half of the prisoners in California are positive for Hepatitis C. Once you have Hepatitis C you are at risk of passing it at any stage of the disease even if you have no symptoms.

HCV positive people should not share any item that could have blood on it, such as toothbrushes, razors, tweezers, nail files, or needles. All wounds, even small cuts need to be bandaged.

It is difficult to find information about woman-to-woman sexual transmission of Hepatitis C. Heterosexual transmission is very low. It is best to use the same precautions one would use with HIV. No sex during your period or sex that causes any exchange of blood. Be careful about passionate kissing just after brushing your teeth.

HCV cont'd on OOT pg. 4

sary, transgender prisoners are routinely denied hormone medications, regardless if they had been on them before being incarcerated. They are subject to strip searches in front of non-trans prison guards, called names and ridiculed by both inmates and staff, humiliated by the medical staff, and denied the appropriate clothing and hairstyles for the gender they identify with.

This assault on visitation affects all California families, both queer and straight. It's not too late to make your voice heard. Please write or FAX California Department of Corrections Director Edward Alameda at P.O. Box 942883, Sacramento, CA 94283-0001, FAX (916) 322-2877. You can also FAX to the CDC Regulation & Policy Branch at (916) 322-3842. For more information, please visit our website at www.prisons.org.



DEMONSTRATE

Health Care, Not Prison for Sick Women!

Saturday, April 27, 1:00 p.m.

Front Gates of Central CA
Women's Facility, Chowchilla
Gather at 9:00AM

From SF: Safeway /Church & Market
From Oakland: MacArthur BART

Info: 415-255-7036 ext 4, 510-642-8718

Out of Time
c/o Out of Control Lesbian Committee
3543--18th Street, Box 30
San Francisco, CA 94110

As the devastation of Palestine unfolds before our eyes, our hearts go out to the people of Palestine, to Jews and Palestinians alike who are struggling for an end to the occupation, struggling for justice and peace in the Middle East. Because OOT is dedicated to the situation of political and other prisoners, we are providing information about prisoners that are generally ignored in media coverage: Palestinian children who are being swept off the street and a growing number of Israeli reservists who are being jailed for refusing to fight.

Hundreds of Palestinian Children From Occupied Territories Incarcerated

Excerpted from website of Campaign to Free Palestinian Child Prisoners

Each year, hundreds of Palestinian children from the Occupied Palestinian Territories are arrested, interrogated, and imprisoned by the Israeli military authorities. Violations of international law designed to safeguard the rights of children deprived of their liberty are widespread and systematic.

As early as July 1999, there has been documented evidence of increased violations of children's rights to due process and to adequate standards of detention.

In the period from 1998 to 2000, there was a 183% increase in the number of cases received by DCI/PS (89 in 1998 to 252 in 2000). In addition, there was a serious increase in the number of children arrested between the ages of 13 and 14. In 1999, arrested children aged 13 and 14 represented 9.90% of all DCI/PS cases. In the year 2000, that figure increased to 21.83%.

Moreover, there is a marked increase in the length of sentences received by Palestinian children. In 1999, the majority of cases (43.51%) received sentences of less than one month, with 30.53% receiving between 1 to 6 months. In 2000, however, the percentage of cases receiving less than one month decreased to 35.48%, while the number receiving between six months to one year increased from 19.08% to 40.3%, thus constituting the majority.

In addition, conditions of detention have steadily declined with an increased number of attacks on child prisoners by Israeli prison authorities, the virtual elimination of family visits as a result of the Israeli imposed closure on the occupied territories, and decreased access to child prisoners by Palestinian human rights attorneys.

The Campaign to Free Palestinian Child Political Prisoners is part of DCI/PS's ongoing work to promote and protect the rights of Palestinian children. WWW.DCI-PAL.ORG

The information provided on this website is based on DCI/PS's experience in working with Palestinian child prisoners. It is designed both to raise awareness of the issue as well as to mobilize people to engage in advocacy efforts designed to bring about Israel's compliance with international law.

More Israeli Soldiers Publicly Refuse To Fight

"...I didn't want to refuse orders... If there had been any way to avoid it, I think I would have chosen it... But there are times when there is no other choice but to refuse... I was ordered to spend three weeks escorting and guarding settlers. I was to conduct body searches on Palestinian passersby, and carry out arrests whenever necessary. If I had done that, I wouldn't have been me..." (anonymous)

"...We were raised to be officers with values, and they've turned us into combatants who deal in bloodshed and war crimes... We all have limits. You can be the best officer, and suddenly you're required to do things that you can't be asked to do: to shoot at people, stop ambulances, destroy houses when no one knows who lives in them..." (Lt. David Zonshein, a 28 year old software engineer)

"...I am a soldier in the Israeli army, imprisoned for refusal to take part in repression, arising from a sense that it is out of the question to be a Jew, the son of a people of refugees, and yet repress a people of refugees... I am concerned for humans as such. For those denied the right to live like me, with food and clothes and fun and good



health and dreams of success... I am concerned for those whose homes have been demolished and their fruit groves devastated..." (David Hacha-Herson, an 18 year old refusenik)

"...Initially, this was a quiet decision, still a little shy, something like 'I am just a bit weird, can't go and can't talk about it too much either.'... as the level of insanity, hatred, and incitement kept rising, as the generals were turning the Israeli Defense Forces into a terror organization, the decision was turning into an outcry. 'If you can't see that this is one big crime leading us to the brink of annihilation, then something is terribly wrong with you.' And then I discovered that I was not alone. Like discovering life on another planet..." (Sergeant Major Asaf Orion)

These are the words of some of the 400+ Israeli reserve combat officers and soldiers who are refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Their refusal is not a popular one in Israel. They face enormous domestic pressure to participate with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the current onslaught against the Palestinian communities. And in some cases Refusniks (as they call themselves) have faced disciplinary hearings and been jailed for up to 28 days.

This protest movement against the Israeli army's conduct in the past 18 months of fighting began with a note tacked to a Tel Aviv University bulletin board in January. That day a grass roots movement was born and has mushroomed. Although the 400+ signers of the refusal petition represent a fraction of the tens of thousands of Israelis who perform military duty, it is the status of those long-serving reservists in combat units, which gives their criticism such weight. Although the Refusniks may not change their government's policy, they have provoked public debate about the army's conduct toward Palestinian civilians (LA Times, Feb 2, 2002).

We applaud the Refusenik's courage and bravery. And we urge our readers to help support their efforts to organize and publish ads in the Israeli press.

For tax deductible donations: the Shefa Fund, writing *Courage to Refuse* on the memo

The Shefa Fund
8459 Ridge Avenue, 2nd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19128-2119

For more info: www.seruv.org or www.oznik.com



photo from oznik.com

AL-FATIHA CONDEMNS LATEST EGYPTIAN CONVICTIONS

Al-Fatiha, an international organization dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) condemned the latest round of convictions against 5 men in Egypt today and called for international action against the government of Egypt. On Monday, March 11th, five Egyptian men were sentenced to three years in prison with hard labor for "practicing sexual immorality," a local euphemism for homosexuality, according to Reuters news sources. Al-Fatiha joined human rights organizations around the world in demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all men in Egypt who have been convicted because of their alleged sexual orientation.

Al-Fatiha, PO Box 33532, Washington, DC 20033 Email: gaymuslims@yahoo.com
Web: www.al-fatiha.net

OUT OF TIME

Blows to Berenson Case

Lori Berenson, a US citizen, human rights activist, and freelance journalist incarcerated in Peru received two devastating legal setbacks this past month. Although her first conviction by a military tribunal for membership in the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement was overturned, at retrial Lori was convicted for assisting the Tupac Amaru and given a twenty-year sentence.

Despite the fact that she has been in prison since November, 1995, Lori's subsequent petition for a pardon was immediately denied.

Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo, apparently responding to questions from President Bush, stated in March that the Lori Berenson case was "totally closed." However family and supporters adamantly refuse to give up the struggle to free Lori. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is reviewing a petition by Berenson. It could recommend the case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which has the authority to order Peru to overturn her conviction.

For more info contact: www.freelori.org

Vieques Prisoner Tito Kayak Released

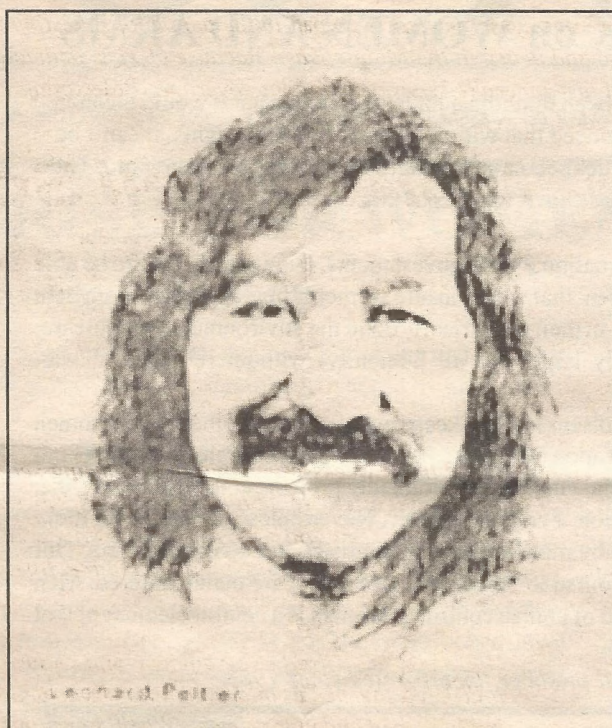
After finishing his year-long prison sentence for civil disobedience in Vieques, environmental leader Alberto De Jesus (Tito Kayak) denounced the institutional physical and psychological treatment he suffered while in the Manhattan Correctional Facility in New York. Kayak stated that he was attacked physically and received constant threats and insults. He was also denied basic necessities such as water, medical attention, and basic sanitary provisions.

"There was a pattern of constant and progressing conduct against me. Since I got into the prison system they put me in the 'hole' (solitary) from August til November when I was in the so-called Special Housing Unit. I didn't have services for bathing, without water, without electricity, without a toothbrush, without a towel. The food was always cold, and I was nearly always locked down 24 hours a day.

On January 17, 2002 (a day before they were supposedly to transfer me to Puerto Rico) they shut me up again in the hole, I think it was because I tried to say goodbye to another prisoner. Four officials from the prison attacked me physically. They took me to a cell, they tied me up, and they punched, kicked and kneed me. I asked to be taken to a doctor, but it wasn't until five days later that I received medical attention and they took x-rays.

Afterwards they shut me in the hole, with a floodlight constantly on and a bed that they monitored all the time. I was about nine days without bathing, without visitation rights, without the right to phone calls, without commissary rights. I couldn't buy stamps to write to my family, my friends, or Friends of the Sea (PR environmental group Tito founded). The guards mocked and insulted me

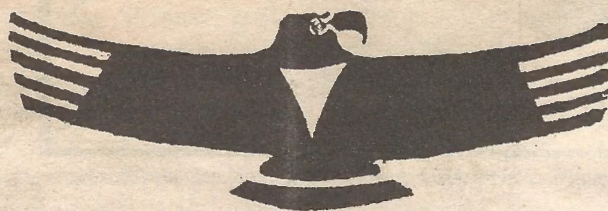
"In relation to the situation in Vieques, I will not be free until the Navy leaves our sister island. I won't feel free until Carlos Zenon, his son Yabureibo, and the student Pedro Colon Almenas are here with me. These are the real heroes," affirmed the founder of Friends of the Sea: <http://e1.docs.yahoo.com/info/utos.html>



drawing from freepeltier.org

LEONARD PELTIER'S MOTION DENIED

The latest motion to reduce Leonard's sentence was denied by the U.S. District Court of North Dakota. Judge Magnison denied the motion without a hearing based upon issues of timeliness. The court said that the significant developments in question (government admission that it can't prove who shot agents/ballistics) had already been litigated. Judge Magnison refused to consider these issues despite the clearly different character of the case, which sought a review of sentence and not a new trial like before. Attorney Eric Seitz is appealing the decision to the Eighth Circuit.



AL AMIN CONVICTED; SENTENCED TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

Rejecting the prosecution's call for a death sentence, a jury sentenced Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, the former '60s radical known as H. Rap Brown to life in prison for killing a sheriff's deputy in a shootout two years ago.

The jury deliberated for about five hours before deciding to spare the life of Al-Amin. The Muslim cleric will not have a chance at parole, but his brother, Ed Brown stated, "He's alive — and that creates another day for us to fight."

Al-Amin leads one of the nation's largest black Muslim groups, the National Ummah. The movement, which has formed 36 mosques around the nation, is credited with revitalizing poverty-stricken pockets such as Atlanta's West End, where he owned a grocery store.

All Jailed Mothers in Russia to Be Pardoned

From Reuters: Jailed Russian mothers are to be freed regardless of their crimes under a proposed amnesty approved by President Vladimir Putin. The proposal would free thousands of women by extending an amnesty approved in November by the State Duma lower house of Parliament. That pardon freed roughly 23,000 women and children under 16, but included only women who were pregnant, disabled, over 50 or single mothers. The new measure would extend to women who had committed serious crimes left out of the November amnesty — with each case being examined individually.

Russia has one of the world's biggest prison populations, with roughly a million inmates, and regularly uses amnesties to control numbers in its bulging prisons. Human rights campaigners have repeatedly condemned the squalid, disease-ridden conditions in which most prisoners live. According to Justice Ministry figures published last November and quoted by Interfax News Agency, 493 children under the age of three live in Russian prisons.

Statement from Cuba Conference National Coordinating Committee

We regret to inform you that the Tear Down the Walls Conference scheduled to be held in Havana, Cuba on March 27-29, 2002 has been indefinitely postponed.

Even though more than 100 people eventually signed up to attend the conference, much of this happened later than needed to have a large and successful event. The US National Coordinating Committee and our hosts in Cuba, OSPAAAL (The Organization of Solidarity of Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America), had initially anticipated 300 participants, but recognized that due to 911 and a late take off of registration activity, we were unable to achieve that goal...

We want to thank everyone who supported the conference as well as those who actually registered to attend. We also want to profoundly thank OSPAAAL for their steadfast and unrelenting efforts to help free political prisoners in the United States and around the world and for the significant resources and effort they put into this conference.

Certainly we continue to be committed to the work to free US-held Political Prisoners. In many ways that commitment has been intensified. We call upon everyone in reach of this statement to join the campaign to free U.S. held Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War.

Portugal Gives Abortionist 8.5 Year Prison Term

Maria do Ceu Ribeiro worked as a nurse but moonlighted as an abortionist in Portugal's north, ending pregnancies in a well-stocked clinic she built behind her house. Everyone knew about it: she distributed cards printed with her name, her address and a map, and she paid a network of people, from pharmacists to taxi drivers, to send pregnant women her way.

But abortion is illegal in Portugal, with a few narrow exceptions, and Ms. Ribeiro's practice came to an abrupt end with her arrest in the winter of 2000. In January, 2002, she received a sentence of 8.5 years.

Can't Jail the Spirit: New Edition

The fifth edition of *Can't Jail the Spirit* is hot off the presses. *Can't Jail the Spirit* is a great collection of biographies of political prisoners held in the United States. Within the new 234 page edition are many new and updated bios in this edition along with a number of introductory pieces by ex-political prisoners and others. The selling press is \$20 a copy plus \$4 for shipping and handling. Bulk prices for ten or more copies are available on request. **Checks or money orders should be made out to CEML and sent to: CEML, PO BOX 578172, Chicago, Illinois 60657-8172.**

From Inside: MARILYN BUCK on WOMEN AND ARMS

Like many other liberation-minded women and men, I have been thinking a lot lately about what it would mean in the concrete to move forward to a different world. I am convinced that without women's human rights, it can't be done. And, increasingly, I have come to believe that the political-economic culture of war must be overcome. The situation in Afghanistan has propelled me to try to think more concretely about this...

It is one thing to advocate women becoming more involved in national/state governments. It is another thing to be able to make radical changes that would benefit women and children: that would insure women's human rights. From here it seems that the most dynamic work is being done by women in their countries; around the environment, health-care, women's issues — control of land, water, etc. (ultimately issues for all humanity) without recourse to war.

The accumulation of arms with all that then follows ultimately disempowers - keeps out of power - women. Even women warriors/guerillas have been sent back to the house after liberation struggles! How do we build strategies which both reject arms and confront arms to defeat that bully type of social control that ultimately protects and defines the state. I know many people worldwide have been asking this question. I am a latecomer. Nevertheless, it does seem more imperative to find ways to avoid the rage of arms controlled by male military apparatuses, and to disarm them. Our societies are raised on the assumption of war as the only recourse to "security". The myths are male-centered. Men depend on aggressiveness as part of their self-definition. And of course control of women is a central element of that definition. Control begins at home. -March, 2002

Marilyn Buck is a North American anti-imperialist political prisoner, incarcerated since 1985.



Pen and pencil drawing from *Insider Art*, Kurt Kirchner, "Kosovo"

Ex-Political Prisoners Honored in New York

Two of our favorite dyke ex-political prisoners, Susan Rosenberg and Laura Whitehorn, were honored at the 6th Annual Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Risk-Taker Awards in New York City on March 5, 2002. Their co-defendant Alan Berkman also received the award along with Robert Meeropol (son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and founder/director of the Rosenberg Fund For Children), The Innocence Project of Cardozo Law School (pioneers in the use of DNA to defend the wrongfully convicted) and Youth Force (leaders in the youth community justice movement).

Susan, Laura and Alan were three of the Resistance Conspiracy defendants charged with the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Capitol building, among other acts of resistance. Alan was paroled several years ago, Laura completed her sentence in the summer of 1999 and Susan was granted clemency by outgoing president Bill Clinton. All presently live in Manhattan.

The awards were given by Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ) a progressive Jewish voice in New York City since 1990. The organization works in coalition with communities of color and labor organizations to achieve economic equality and an end to all forms of racism by fighting for social programs, fair labor practices, accountable policing and immigrants' rights.

The Federal Parole Board initially held back approval to let Susan and Laura attend the ceremony, but ultimately they were allowed to do so with strict instructions to the JFREJ that they and Alan be seated separately and otherwise kept apart.

Recipients were able to choose the person to introduce them. Laura chose her girlfriend Susie Day who was OUT about their relationship during the introduction, creating a very discernable lesbian presence. Susan, Laura and Alan spoke about the increasing support for the political prisoners who remain inside.

Summer Camp Opportunity for children with incarcerated parents

This summer 108 Bay Area girls and boys, ages 8 1/2 to 11 1/2 will have the opportunity to attend summer camp in Mendocino County. There are three week-long sessions: June 23 - June 29; June 30 - July 6; and July 7 - July 13. The program is free to qualifying children. Transportation is provided from San Francisco, Marin, and the East Bay. According to organizers, Project AVARY, now in its 4th year, provides children of incarcerated parents with a sense of community & belonging, increased self knowledge and esteem, a broadened sense of what is possible in their lives. For more information, contact Danny Rifkin or Jasper Thelin at: Project AVARY (Alternative Ventures for At Risk Youth), 1016 Lincoln Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901 (415) 460-1184 phone.

HCV cont'd from OOT pg 1

What is the difference between chronic and acute symptoms? What about life expectancy?

Acute Hepatitis C is the first infection. Symptoms can vary from nausea to tiredness, loss of appetite, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes). Often there are no symptoms.

About 75% of people with acute HCV develop chronic HCV, which progresses gradually over 40 years or more. Be concerned if you experience increased drowsiness, confusion or irritability, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, increased jaundice, skin rash, nose bleeds, fever, and loss of appetite. If the liver develops cirrhosis you can have ankle swelling, enlarged liver, enlarged spleen, muscle wasting, fluid in the abdomen, and jaundice. A few HCV positive people will get liver cancer.

Even though it progresses slowly, Hepatitis C can be fatal so if you have any of these symptoms, try to get medical attention at once.

How can I know if it's Hep C? What treatments are there? Is there a vaccine?

Exposure to Hepatitis C is determined by blood tests that measure antibodies to the HCV virus (anti-HCV), viral load (HCV-RNA), and increases in liver enzyme ALT more than 10 times normal levels. The only way to know if there is liver damage is by biopsy.

Interferon is sometimes used in combination with ribavirin (Rebetol) is used to treat HCV positive people who have elevated ALT and liver damage. Treatment reverses the symptoms by reducing the viral load, but the drug(s) also make you feel sick. Anti-nausea drugs for nausea, Zofran for fatigue, and diuretic drugs relieve symptoms. Prisons are generally not willing to prescribe these drugs.

There is no immunity to or vaccine for Hepatitis C. You can get it more than once. If both partners have HCV they can re-infect each other because the virus has different forms or subgroups.

What should I eat? What about exercise?

HCV attacks the liver. Avoid alcohol and medications like Tylenol that can cause liver damage. If possible check package insert or ask a clinician about a drug's effect on the liver. Food choices are limited in prison but it's best to eat plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, and whole grains.

Exercise regularly; get lots of rest. Change your work schedule if possible to allow for extra rest. Talk to friends and family, and stay informed.

For more information contact Women's Positive Legal Action Network, 1611 Telegraph Ave., Suite 822, Oakland, CA 94612.

Thanks!

Out of Control sends a big thank you to Vanguard Public Foundation for their generous donation to *Out of Time*. Vanguard is a progressive funding and activist institution whose goal is social justice. Founded in 1972 they organize locally and worldwide to make a difference. The Vanguard Foundation has given over \$18 million to progressive organizations and causes in Northern California since 1992. We give a special thanks to Hari Dillon, president of Vanguard, for his encouragement and support of *Out of Time*.

For more information: Vanguard Public Foundation, 383 Rhode Island St., Suite 301, San Francisco, CA 94103. Phone: 415-487-2111. Web: www.vanguardsf.org